



Governor's Summit on Health, Nutrition and Obesity
About the Obesity Epidemic in California
September 15, 2005

California is experiencing an obesity epidemic that represents a true public health crisis. Over one-half of California's adults are overweight or obese; Californians have gained 360 million pounds in the last 10 years. Approximately 1 in 3 children in California are overweight or at risk of overweight, and almost 40 percent of school-aged children are unfit. In 2000, more than 15 percent of children ages 6 to 19 were obese, a number that has nearly tripled since 1976.

Obesity threatens to surpass tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death. The economic burden of physical inactivity, overweight, and obesity in adults was \$22 billion for California in 2000, and is expected to rise to \$28 billion this year. These costs include medical care, workers' compensation and lost productivity.

All gender, age, and race/ethnic groups have shown an increase during the past decade, but Californians below the poverty level are disproportionately affected. Experts now predict that 1 in 2 African American and Latinos babies born in California will develop diabetes due to obesity in their lifetime. With obesity comes associated health risks, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis-related disabilities, and depression.